

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 2-5 and 7-19 stand in the present application, claims 2-5, 7 and 9 having been amended, claims 1 and 6 having been canceled and new claims 11-19 having been added. Reconsideration and favorable action is respectfully requested in view of the above amendments and the following remarks.

In the Office Action, the Examiner has objected to the specification for a number of informalities. As noted above, Applicants have amended the specification in order to correct the deficiencies noted by the Examiner. The Examiner has also objected to the drawings for failing to show textual labels in Figures 1 and 4. As noted above, Applicants have requested permission from the Examiner to amend Figures 1 and 4 as shown in red ink on the attached copies of those Figures hereto. The proposed red ink revisions of Figures 1 and 4 are believed to obviate the Examiner's objection to the drawings.

Applicants will now discuss the Examiner's rejections of the claims in reverse order for reasons which will become very evident in the discussion that follows.

The Examiner has rejected claims 2-3 and 7-8 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Boguraev et al. in view of Fries. In identifying these two references, the Examiner has misidentified the actual patent numbers relating to the cited art. For example, the Examiner states that the Boguraev et al. patent is U.S. Patent No. 5,390,335. Actually, Boguraev is U.S. Patent No. 5,799,268. The misidentified Patent No. 5,390,335 is actually issued to Stephan et al. and is not listed in the Notice of References Cited attached to the Office Action. Accordingly, Applicants believe that the Examiner meant to rely on Boguraev, U.S. Patent No. 5,799,268. In addition, the

Examiner has also misidentified the Fries et al. reference as being U.S. Patent No. 6,029,232. That Patent No., 6,029,232, is actually issued to Honda, but the Honda patent is not listed on the Notice of References Cited attached to the Office Action. Applicants believe that the Examiner actually meant to rely upon the Fries et al. Patent No. 6,513,031 which issued on January 28, 2003 from an application filed on December 23, 1998, because that reference matches up with citations identified by the Examiner at page 8 of the Office Action. The Examiner states "however, Fries teaches this limitation at column 12, line 65 to column 13, line 11, column 19, lines 46-50." The particular citation to column 19, lines 46-50 appears to match with Fries et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,513,031. (There is another Fries et al. patent cited by the Examiner and included in the Notice of References Cited which is Fries et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,460,029, but the previously mentioned Fries et al. patent is believed to match up better with the Examiner's citations rejecting the claims.) In any event, Applicants respectfully traverse the Examiner's rejection of these claims (no matter which Fries et al. reference was meant to be cited).

More particularly, no matter which Fries et al. patent the Examiner meant to rely on in rejecting claims 2-3 and 7-8, the rejection is improper because neither Fries et al. reference is proper prior art cited against the present application. The present application has priority from July 30, 1998 and July 31, 1998 and therefore predates the effective filing date of both Fries et al. references which were both filed on December 23, 1998. Accordingly, the Examiner's combination of either Fries et al. reference with Boguraev is improper, and claims 2, 3, 7 and 8 patentably define thereover for this reason.

As noted above, Applicants have rewritten claims 2 and 7 in independent form and, accordingly, these claims together with their respective dependent claims 3-5 and 8-9 are believed to be in condition for allowance.

The Examiner has also rejected claims 1, 4-6 and 9-10 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Boguraev (which has been properly identified as U.S. Patent No. 5,799,268). Since claims 1 and 6 have been canceled in favor of claims 2 and 7 being rewritten in independent form, the Examiner's rejection of claims 1, 4-6 and 9 as anticipated by Boguraev is believed to be moot. Applicants respectfully traverse the Examiner's rejection of claim 10 as being anticipated by Boguraev for the following reasons.

Claim 10 recites an apparatus for accessing semi-structured database in accordance with an input request for information and comprises an input means for receiving the input request, a parser for parsing the input request, a slot filler for determining whether the input request includes any verb components, etc. It is clear from the wording of the claim that the operation of the input means, the parser, and the slot filler are on the received input request itself. The function of the apparatus is to allow the database to be accessed and for items to be returned to the user in response to the input request.

In contrast, Boguraev et al. '268 principally disclose a method and apparatus for linguistically analyzing online technical documentation to extract and catalogue from the documentation knowledge essential to creating an online help database, for example (see column 4, lines 52-56). Although at column 7, lines 60-64 it is disclosed that such information may be put to use for example by allowing the user to access and display

information on a display device as directed by commands input by the user from an input device, nowhere within Boguraev is it disclosed that such a user input request is subject to the actions of the parser, or the slot filler, as required by present claim 10.

While within Boguraev a parser is present, this is used to linguistically analyze the online technical documentation (see Figure 3, step 303, and column 15, lines 11-17) and nowhere is it disclosed that such a parser is used to process user input commands for accessing the database. It follows from this, that without such a parsing of the input request the further functions of the slot filler and the query constructor as recited in present claim 10 could also not be performed. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that claim 10 is not anticipated by Boguraev '268, and neither is it obvious thereover.

The new independent claim 11 is directed towards an apparatus for accessing the semi-structured database in a similar vein to present claim 10. Accordingly, claim 11 and its dependent claims 12-19 are believed to patentably define over the cited art for the same reasons given above with respect to claim 10.

Therefore, in view of the above amendments and remarks, it is respectfully requested that the application be reconsidered and that all of claims 2-5 and 7-19, now standing in the application, be allowed and that the case be passed to issue. If there are any other issues remaining which the Examiner believes could be resolved through either a supplemental response or an Examiner's amendment, the

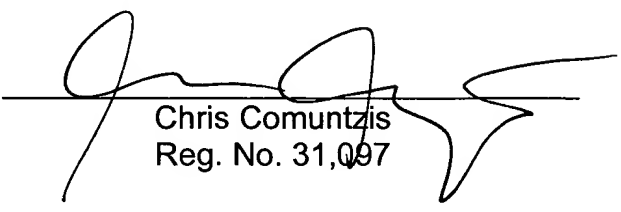
STEEL et al
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Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned at the local telephone exchange indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,

NIXON & VANDERHYE P.C.

By: _____


Chris Comuntzis
Reg. No. 31,097

CC:lmr
1100 North Glebe Road, 8th Floor
Arlington, VA 22201-4714
Telephone: (703) 816-4000
Facsimile: (703) 816-4100